NCRR: A Catalyst for Discovery

NCRR Fact Sheet

Shared Instrumentation gives groups of biomedical investigators access to high-end instruments that cost more than $100,000 a piece. These high-sensitivity, high-resolution instruments accelerate the rate at which researchers can acquire, analyze, display and understand data, but they are unaffordable through investigator-initiated research project grants.

To help solve this dilemma and to ensure that investigators supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) stay at the forefront of modern biology and medicine, NCRR sponsors the Shared Instrumentation Grant (SIG) Program. This program provides a mechanism for groups of NIH-supported researchers to apply for grants to purchase commercially available, technologically sophisticated equipment that costs at least $100,000 per instrument. The maximum SIG award is $500,000.*

Instrumentation purchased with a SIG award must be shared by at least three NIH-supported scientists. This arrangement optimizes the use of federal funds. To promote sharing by a number of investigators and to foster collaborations, SIG-supported instruments are typically located in central core facilities that provide technical expertise and user education.

Examples of key instruments funded by SIG awards and needed to understand fundamental biological processes include, but are not limited to:

1. High-resolution mass spectrometers and high-throughput protein and nucleic acid sequencers used for mapping, sequencing, and analyzing DNA and proteins.

2. High-field NMR spectrometers, x-ray sources, and detectors used to probe the 3-D structure of proteins.

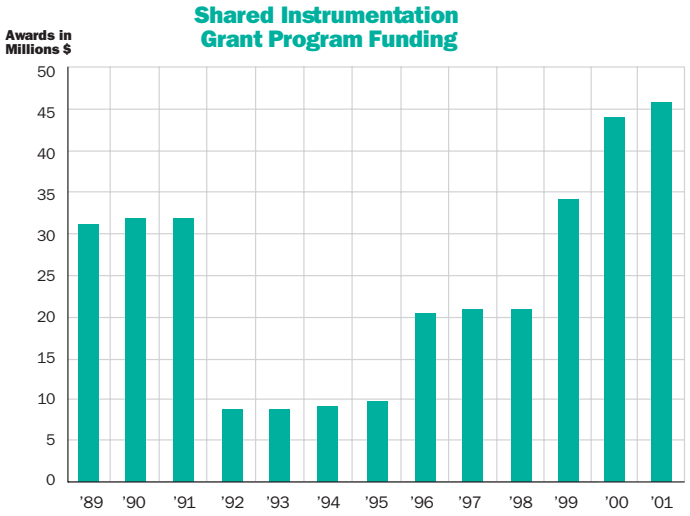
3. Confocal microscopes, NMR imaging devices, cell sorters, and biosensors used to study functional imaging of living systems.

4. High-performance computers used to gather, process, archive, and retrieve complex information sets.

The National Center for Research Resources is a catalyst for discovery for NIH-supported investigations nationwide. NCRR-supported resources—a comprehensive range of human, animal, technological, and more—enable biomedical research advances.

The annual application receipt deadline for a SIG award is usually in March. Costs for technical personnel, supplies, service contracts, and maintenance are not supported. Eligibility criteria, guidelines, and application procedures are described in a program announcement available through the NCRR Web site: http://www.ncrr.nih.gov. Applications for SIG awards are reviewed by instrument-specific study sections based on the following criteria: Demonstrated need for a new or updated instrument; enhancement of the NIH-funded research projects; appropriate technical expertise; adequacy of the plan to administer the grant and to assure equitable use; institutional commitment; and benefit to the biomedical research community.

* *To obtain instruments that cost over $500,000, applicants may be eligible for joint funding provided by NIH and the National Science Foundation. Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the SIG Program office.*



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NCRR Web site: http://www.ncrr.nih.gov

Other available NCRR publications:

Biomedical Technology Resources directory

NCRR Highlights magazine

NCRR Reporter magazine